United Nations S/2017/586

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 July 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 16 December 2016 to 22 June 2017. It brings up to date, since the issuance of my report dated 9 January 2017 (S/2017/20), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2338 (2017).

2. As at 22 June 2017, the strength of the military component stood at 887 (84 women) for all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (17 women) (see annex).

II. Significant political developments

3. During the reporting period, the negotiations between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, were characterized by periods of high intensity and unprecedented progress, as well as various challenges and moments of stasis.

4. On 12 January 2017, the Conference on Cyprus was held in Geneva with the participation of the guarantor Powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and in the presence of the European Union as an observer. The opening of the Conference followed three days of intense negotiations between Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades, from 9 to 11 January, culminating in the presentation by each side of its maps with territorial adjustments, which were safely stored in a United Nations vault. The Conference marked a historic and decisive phase in the Cyprus talks, as it was the first time that the above-mentioned actors had come together to discuss the chapter on security and guarantees, the sixth and final chapter of the negotiations.

5. Following the convening of the Conference, the sides continued to work on the island, mostly on four of the six negotiation chapters: governance and power-sharing; the economy; property; and matters relating to the European Union. Regular meetings were held between the leaders and the negotiators, and work was conducted at the expert level. In the period between 16 February and 11 April, however, the process entered a hiatus owing to controversy between the sides over the decision by the Parliament of Cyprus to introduce an annual commemoration in

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public schools of the referendum held in 1950 on union with Greece (*enosis*). The negotiations resumed on 11 April, and, in the period that followed, the leaders and negotiators engaged in frequent meetings, making some progress, albeit at a slow pace.

6. On 4 June, following a dinner with the two leaders hosted by the Secretary-General in New York, a statement was issued, announcing that the Conference would reconvene in Switzerland in June. It was noted in the statement that progress in the chapter on security and guarantees was essential for reaching an overall agreement and building trust between the two communities in relation to their future security. It was also agreed to continue in parallel the bicommunal negotiations on all other outstanding issues, beginning with territory, property and governance and power-sharing. Following consultations with all participants, it was confirmed that the Conference would reconvene on 28 June at the political level, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, with the participation of Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, as well as the guarantor Powers, and in the presence of the European Union as an observer.

III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

7. The Force is mandated to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. By patrolling the 180-kilometre buffer zone, the military and police components prevent military violations or incidents that could raise tension between the opposing forces, between civilians and military personnel and among civilians. Continual liaison by UNFICYP with military, police and civilian counterparts on both sides of the island is important in the absence of direct contact between those bodies. The civilian component of UNFICYP, in coordination with the military and police components, works inter alia to manage civilian activity in the buffer zone and build confidence between the two communities through a variety of intercommunal initiatives, contributing to broader United Nations efforts to support the peace process.

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. Throughout the reporting period, the integrity and stability of the buffer zone were maintained through UNFICYP liaison and coordination. Interventions by UNFICYP were required on a daily basis to manage low-level disputes or misunderstandings caused by civilian activities or cases of ill-discipline of the military and to protest against changes to the status quo and violations of the aide-memoire of 1989. In addition, the Force Commander, Chief of Staff and sector commanders of UNFICYP simultaneously maintained regular and direct lines of communication with the respective commanders to ensure effective contacts at the senior level.

9. Nevertheless, challenges to the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone continued. The lack of an agreed set of rules between the opposing forces and UNFICYP with regard to activity in and around the buffer zone, which UNFICYP sought to establish through the aide-memoire of 1989, remains a cause of unnecessary tension.

10. The prevalence of closed-circuit television equipment at positions, in particular those that remain manned, continued to be a concern. Such installations

confer a military advantage, unless the position is unmanned. Although no installation of new cameras has been observed in 2017, the existing manned locations with cameras installed are considered violations.

11. Military positions established by both forces inside the buffer zone that violate the status quo, in particular at Strovilia, remain in place and are classified as permanent violations. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity

12. During the reporting period, UNFICYP completed demining operations on the last 2 of 28 legacy minefields, the locations of which were provided to the Turkish Cypriot leader by the Greek Cypriot leader as part of a package of confidence-building measures announced in May 2015.

13. As noted in my previous report, clearance has not begun of the minefield just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mines being washed into the buffer zone in 2014 and 2015, despite UNFICYP having raised the issue with the Turkish forces. The Force remains committed to facilitating clearance of the Mammari area and the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three belong to the National Guard and one to the Turkish forces. While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required to counter a perceived threat. The Force engaged with the sides to identify priorities for the survey and clearance of minefields across the island in 2017 and 2018 and stands ready to support them, initially through a non-technical survey of the relevant areas. The Force has sought prompt agreement from the sides on initiating the survey, given the importance of demining as a safety measure and in achieving the ultimate goal of a mine-free Cyprus.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

14. The police component of UNFICYP continued to liaise with both sides to assist in the development of anti-crime strategies and to facilitate, as necessary, the investigation of crimes and criminal matters inside and across the buffer zone. The Force continued to support broader maintenance of law and order through its facilitation of the work of the Joint Communications Room, which enables information to be shared on crimes, criminal matters and humanitarian cases, in parallel with its parent body, the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. During the reporting period, 160 communications were exchanged through the Joint Communications Room, including on cases of smuggling and escaped prisoners and one case of child abduction.

15. Such efforts notwithstanding, the division of the island continued to present challenges to law enforcement within and across the buffer zone. In January 2017, I reported on the role of UNFICYP in escorting police from both sides into the bicommunal village of Pyla to conduct simultaneous searches of eight casinos that had been operating illegally for several years. Although those searches led to the closure of the casinos, all eight have since reopened, in large part because the conditions that enabled those casinos to operate have not changed.

16. The Force continued to address high numbers of unauthorized incursions into the buffer zone by civilians. A total of 503 such incursions were recorded during the reporting period. Incursions by armed hunters are a particular source of concern,

because, dressed in fatigues, they can be mistaken for military personnel. The efforts of UNFICYP to control hunting through liaison with local authorities and intelligence-led patrols appear to have had some success, given that 17 incursions by Greek Cypriot hunters into the buffer zone were recorded in the current reporting period, compared with 80 during the same period in 2015/16. Engagement by UNFICYP also helped to defuse tension caused by construction and farming close to the ceasefire lines.

17. The number of applications submitted by civilians and permits issued by UNFICYP has steadily risen over the past decade, indicating an increase in the interest of Cypriots in making use of their property in the buffer zone, greater confidence in the security of the zone and some acceptance of the processes of UNFICYP for regulating access. The facilitation of normal civilian activity in that sensitive, militarized area remained a priority for UNFICYP and was conducted through engagement with the authorities, local community representatives and civilians seeking to work inside the area. As part of its efforts to regulate access and facilitate activities that would not compromise safety and security in the area, UNFICYP issued 970 permits for farming, civilian construction and other types of employment during the reporting period. The university in Pyla continued to operate without UNFICYP authorization.

18. Recognizing that increased trust between communities must underpin the political efforts to reach a settlement in Cyprus and contribute to a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP enhanced its support to organizations and individuals working to promote intercommunal interaction. Through the facilitation of 88 intercommunal events with 4,932 participants and by hosting an additional 98 intercommunal gatherings with 2,909 participants organized by civil society and diplomatic partners in the buffer zone, UNFICYP provided an umbrella for interaction between the communities. It also facilitated cooperation among municipal offices in Nicosia on environmental, social, health and other issues of common concern. The Cyprus Dialogue, a new initiative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, was launched in 2017, facilitated by UNFICYP. Unions of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot journalists were convened at the Ledra Palace Hotel on 25 April as part of the programme, with a view to strengthening professional and ethical standards of journalism on the island.

19. From 18 May to the end of the reporting period, the Unite Cyprus Now group held almost daily demonstrations at the Ledra Street crossing point in the buffer zone in support of the peace talks. The Force liaised closely with relevant authorities and the organizers and maintained a visible presence at the crossing during each demonstration to help to ensure a calm atmosphere.

20. Discussion and debate within Cyprus about the role and potential of women in promoting and making peace intensified in the past months. During the reporting period, UNFICYP increased its efforts to encourage the contributions of women to peacebuilding and political decision-making by providing support to or participating in nine events focusing on issues including countering violence against women, women in the changing world of work, the involvement of women in the peace process, the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and women working in divided societies. Among those events was a global open day organized by UNFICYP on 16 December 2016.

21. The United Nations continued to facilitate the work of the 11 technical committees established by the leaders since 2008 to work on confidence-building measures aimed at improving the everyday lives of Cypriots, as well as encouraging and facilitating greater interaction among them. Notably, after many months of efforts and with the agreement of the leaders, the Technical Committee on

Education launched the Imagine programme during the reporting period. Led by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, the programme provides an opportunity for children from across the island to interact and for teachers from both north and south to acquire and practise techniques for peace education.

22. Eight of the technical committees are facilitated by UNFICYP, including the Technical Committee on Crossings, which resumed its work to open two crossings at Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç and Deryneia/Derinya in the reporting period, with financial support from the European Commission and technical support from the United Nations Development Programme. Both those partners supported the work of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, which has completed three major architectural restoration projects since January, providing opportunities for Greek Cypriots and Maronites to visit and worship at those sites. Of particular note was the restoration of the Maronite church Agia Marina, the first religious monument located in a military site of the Turkish forces to be restored. Although other committees continued to meet during the period, their achievements were more limited. Continued political and financial support to the technical committees is imperative if they are to fulfil in earnest their mandate to improve the daily lives of Cypriots.

23. The religious leaders of Cyprus also continued to demonstrate their commitment to joint dialogue and the promotion of religious freedom within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. During the reporting period, they played a role in highlighting gender issues, issuing a joint statement on 8 March, under the auspices of the Religious Track, condemning all forms of violence against women. The religious leaders also devoted attention to the issue of the restoration of religious monuments and places of worship. Together with several other key actors, they helped to secure support for the stabilization of two significant churches, Saint George and Saint Jacob, which are located along the Green Line. This important cultural preservation work has been included on the agenda of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage.

24. Access to religious sites has been a concern of the Religious Track and worshippers alike. Although freedom of movement across the island is facilitated as a result of the seven crossings, religious sites are not always accessible to all who wish to use them. Services are permitted only once annually at some churches in the north, and cumbersome procedures are in place for the transfer of religious icons from south to north to be used during religious services. Some limitations to religious worship in mosques in the south remain in place.

25. Despite those and other impediments, Cypriots continued to express strong interest in holding religious services and commemorative activities across the island. When requested, UNFICYP endeavoured to facilitate such activities, in support of freedom of worship and as part of its wider efforts to promote intercommunal interaction and reconciliation. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated the participation of more than 9,000 people in 41 such services and commemorative events, of which 4 were in the buffer zone and 37 in the north. During the same period in 2015/16, a total of 50 were held, of which 48 were in the north and 2 in the buffer zone. UNFICYP also facilitated the crossing of 983 pilgrims from the northern part of Cyprus to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque in Larnaca on 20 December 2016. The Force noted with concern the decline in the number of religious services approved for its facilitation in the north in comparison to the same period in 2015/16, as well as other limitations and restrictions that have hampered worship. All restrictions on the freedom of worship, including those relating to access to religious sites, should be lifted.

26. Beyond the buffer zone, UNFICYP continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to the remaining, largely older, 333 Greek Cypriots (of whom 156 are men and 177 are women) and 96 Maronites (of whom 41 are men and 55 are women) residing in the north and to provide logistical support and outreach to the Greek Cypriot primary and secondary schools on the Karpas Peninsula. A Greek-speaking nurse continued to provide services to Greek Cypriots living on the Karpas Peninsula.

27. The Force continued to engage with the relevant authorities in Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos to identify issues relating to access to health, welfare and educational services for Turkish Cypriots. There were no developments with regard to the establishment of a Turkish-language school in Limassol, although Turkish-speaking pupils continued to have access to Turkish-language education at a primary school and a high school there. In connection with the previously reported incident in November 2015, in which two vehicles belonging to Turkish Cypriots were targeted by young Greek Cypriots throwing stones, UNFICYP was informed that court hearings to prosecute several individuals accused of those attacks would be held later in 2017. A clear resolution of such cases would serve to build confidence between the two communities and signal that such acts would not be tolerated in Cyprus.

28. The Force visited two Greek Cypriots held in detention facilities in the north and 13 Turkish Cypriots held in detention facilities in the south to monitor and assist with any humanitarian issues faced by them.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

29. As at 15 June, the bicommunal team of archaeologists of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, a long-standing confidence-building initiative, had exhumed the remains of 1,229 persons on both sides of the island. To date, the remains of 764 missing persons, of a total of 2,001, have been identified and returned to their respective families, including, during the reporting period, those of 27 individuals. In line with the permission received in November 2015, the Committee has conducted, thus far in 2017, nine excavations in military areas in the north, leading to the recovery of the remains of 14 individuals.

30. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to receive valuable support from the Mine Action Service, which gave advice on the use of detection technology, trained staff of the Committee in the operation of metal detectors and provided assistance by scanning several locations with metal detectors to help to locate burial sites. Building on years of close cooperation, in April, the Committee signed memorandums of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team in order to enhance cooperation in the training of scientists from conflict areas in the recovery and identification of the remains of missing persons.

31. From 24 April to 5 May, staff of the archival research unit and the third member of the Committee reviewed UNFICYP documents from 1963 to 1964 and from 1974, which are held in United Nations archives in New York, with the aim of locating information on additional burial sites of missing persons. An ongoing review of UNFICYP archives in Nicosia has also resulted in potentially relevant documents being shared with the members of the Committee. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee had exchanges with countries with potentially relevant archives. In the light of the advanced age of both relatives and witnesses, it is critical that the necessary means and information, including from relevant archives, be made available to the Committee as soon as possible.

V. Transition planning

32. As requested by the Security Council, the joint working group established by UNFICYP, which includes my good offices mission and is supported by relevant Headquarters departments, continued to conduct transition planning in relation to a settlement. Such planning remained focused on the key areas of United Nations support in a post-settlement period, which had been agreed upon in principle by the negotiators, in the presence of my Special Adviser and my Special Representative, in November 2016. During the reporting period, further discussions between the sides on the details of potential United Nations support for the implementation of a settlement yielded limited results.

VI. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

33. During the reporting period, two category 1 allegations, not relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, were reported and referred for investigation. Two reports of category 2 allegations were referred for investigation.

34. The Force's training cell held 16 training sessions on conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse during the reporting period, involving 814 military and police personnel. The Force has also been preparing a play designed to highlight, in an interactive way, the Organization's policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

VII. Financial and administrative aspects

35. I am pleased to report that UNFICYP has achieved gender parity among its international civilian staff, contributing to my goal of attaining gender parity and enhancing gender equality across the United Nations system. The Force continues work towards the achievement of gender parity among national staff members and, where possible, will seek to increase the proportion of women serving in military and police components, for which it will require the support of troop- and police-contributing countries.

36. The General Assembly, by its resolution 71/300, appropriated the amount of $54.0 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $18.3 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

37. As at 3 July 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNFICYP amounted to $15.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,462.6 million.

38. Reimbursement of troop costs was made for the period up to 30 April 2017, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 March 2017, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations

39. The Force continues to play an important role in maintaining a calm and secure environment in Cyprus and in facilitating communication across the divide. By doing so, it has created conditions conducive to the rebuilding of trust between

the communities and constructive negotiations between the sides. It is important that those gains be consolidated during the coming period.

40. I continue to call upon both communities to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to widen and deepen economic, social, cultural, sporting and similar ties and contacts, including with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the concerns of Turkish Cypriots with regard to isolation. I urge both leaders to persist in addressing those issues.

41. There have been moments of historical importance in the negotiation process, which, immediately following the end of the reporting period, reached a crucial stage during the Conference on Cyprus held in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, from 28 June to 6 July. Reflecting the strong commitment of the United Nations to supporting the negotiations towards a united Cyprus, I personally engaged with the sides on 30 June and 6 July in an effort to assist them, together with the guarantor countries, to tackle the remaining core issues so as to allow them to reach a strategic agreement on the Cyprus question. As mentioned in my remarks to the press in the early morning of 7 July, following a lengthy and complex round of negotiations, and despite the very strong commitment and engagement of the parties, the guarantor Powers and the European Union as an observer, the Conference was closed without an agreement being reached.

42. Given the disappointing outcome of the Conference, I invite the parties and in particular the leaders to reflect deeply upon the results and the possible road ahead. As to the United Nations, as facilitator of the process, its role in the framework of the negotiations remains at the disposal of the parties.

43. I commend Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı for their commitment throughout the more than two years of leader-led negotiations and acknowledge the efforts of the guarantor Powers to work with the sides to find a mutually acceptable solution. The fate of the process is in their hands.

44. I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 31 January 2018, at its current authorized strength. I should like to thank the 36 countries that have contributed, since 1964, either troops, police or both to the mission. I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who lost their lives over that period in support of peace in Cyprus.

45. The partnerships of the United Nations with local, regional and international actors are critical to the ongoing efforts in Cyprus. I should like to express thanks to those partners and in particular to the European Commission, which provided assistance in a number of areas during the reporting period, including through contributions for work on the two new crossing points, to the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and to the Committee on Missing Persons, as well as for the critically important facilitation by the United Nations of the talks under the auspices of my good offices mission.

46. I should like to express my gratitude to Elizabeth Spehar for her service as my Special Representative in Cyprus and Head of Mission and for her extensive and direct support to the talks as my Deputy Special Adviser. I also express my continued deep appreciation to my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, for his unceasing efforts to facilitate the talks. Lastly, I extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

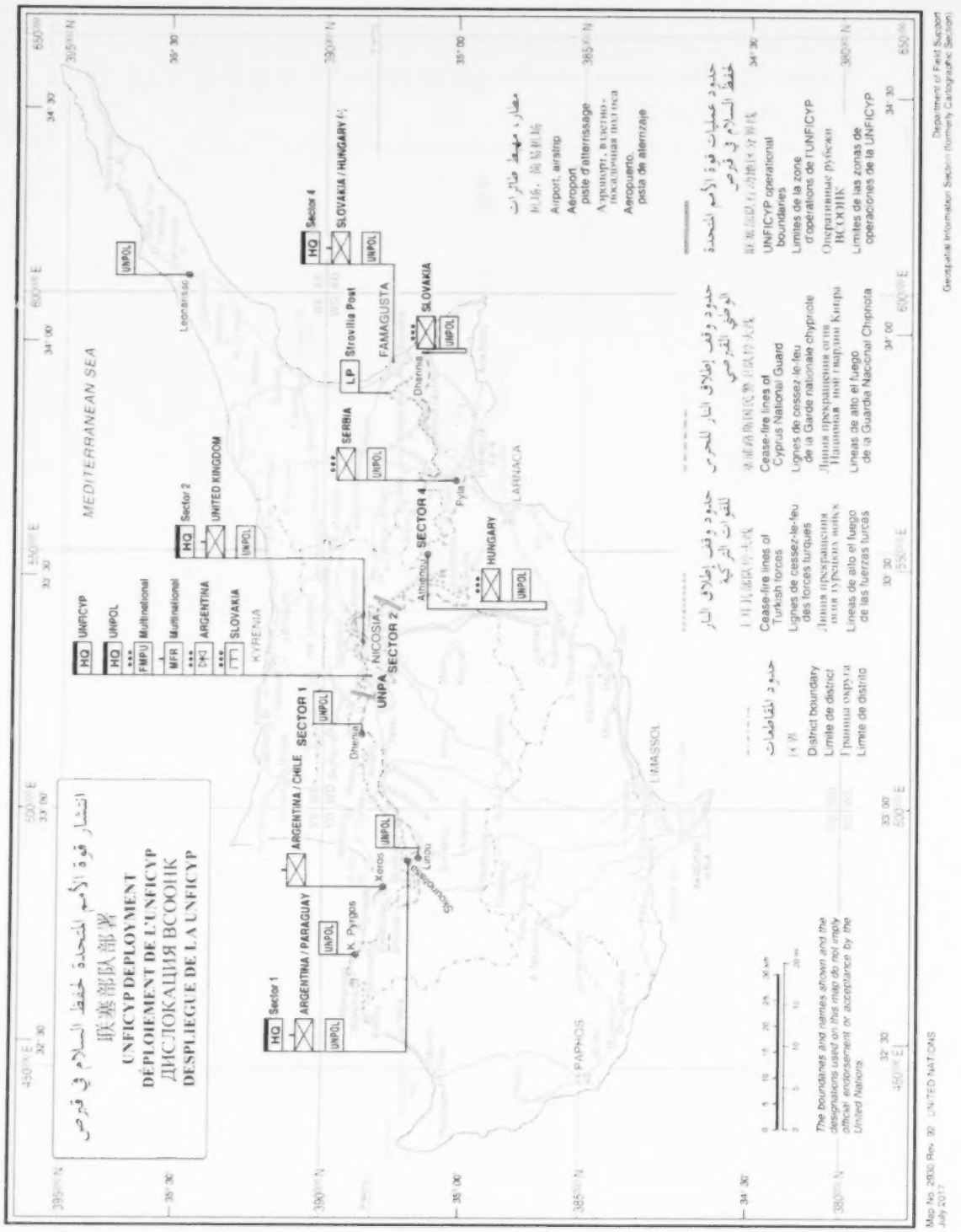
Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 12 June 2017)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina	276
Austria	4
Bangladesh	2
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	14
Hungary	77
Paraguay	14
Serbia	47
Slovakia	169
Ukraine	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	279
Total[a]	**887**

Country	*Police personnel*
Australia	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
Bulgaria	3
China	6
India	4
Ireland	12
Italy	2
Lithuania	1
Montenegro	4
Romania	4
Russian Federation	3
Serbia	2
Slovakia	5
Ukraine	10
Total[a]	**69**

[a] Of the military personnel, 803 are men and 84 are women. Of the police personnel, 52 are men and 17 are women.


UNFICYP DEPLOYMENT
DÉPLOIEMENT DE L'UNFICYP
ДИСЛОКАЦИЯ ВСООНК
DESPLIEGUE DE LA UNFICYP
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
HQ UNFICYP
HQ UNPOL
FMPU Multinational
MFR Multinational
HQ Sector 1
ARGENTINA / PARAGUAY
ARGENTINA / CHILE
SECTOR 1
HQ Sector 2
UNITED KINGDOM
ARGENTINA
SLOVAKIA
UNPA
NICOSIA
SECTOR 2
SECTOR 4
HUNGARY
SERRIA
SLOVAKIA
HQ Sector 4
SLOVAKIA / HUNGARY
LP Strovilia Post
FAMAGUSTA
Leonarisso
Athienou
Dhenia
Xeros
K. Pyrgos
Pyla
Dhiorios
Limnitis
PAPHOS
LIMASSOL
LARNACA
Cease-fire lines of Turkish forces
Lignes de cessez-le-feu des forces turques
Линия прекращения огня турецких войск
Líneas de alto el fuego de las fuerzas turcas
Cease-fire lines of Cyprus National Guard
Lignes de cessez-le-feu de la Garde nationale chypriote
Линия прекращения огня Национальной гвардии Кипра
Líneas de alto el fuego de la Guardia Nacional Chipriota
UNFICYP operational boundaries
Limites de la zone d'opérations de l'UNFICYP
Операционные границы ВСООНК
Límites de las zonas de operaciones de la UNFICYP
District boundary
Limite de district
Границы округа
Límite de distrito
Airport, airstrip
Aéroport, piste d'atterrissage
Аэропорт, взлетно-посадочная полоса
Aeropuerto, pista de aterrizaje
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July 2017
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